

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee,

My name is Bercela Mazariegos. I am an immigrant from Guatemala, and I've lived in Hartford for 13 years. I'm a member of *Hartford Deportation Defense*. I support **HB 6616: An Act Relating to the Expansion of HUSKY Health Benefits for Persons Ineligible Due to Immigration Status**.

My daughter's name is Kristen, she was born in Mexico and is 15 years old. She is in grade 9 in Hartford Public Schools. She doesn't have health insurance and she needs it to get a physical, to go to the dentist, and obviously for any emergencies that come up. emergencies that come up. I'm always telling her to take care of her teeth because in this country it's too expensive to go to the dentist.

It is also difficult without insurance to find clinics that can take care of her. In my daughter's case, she needs glasses and we have had to buy her glasses without the help of any insurance. Sometimes she doesn't hear well either, and I haven't been able to take her to an audiologist because I think the bills are going to be very expensive. With what I earn, it's not enough.

As a mother, you have to think about the rent first. We know that our children's health is important, but if we don't pay rent and we are evicted, what will happen to our family? Going to the doctor is as essential as having a place to live, but right now we are faced with these impossible decisions as parents.

It is also very important that immigrant parents have access to health insurance because we need to take care of our health in order to take care of our families and contribute to Connecticut's economy.

That is why we are asking the Human Services Committee to approve HB 6616 to expand the HUSKY program to age 26 for our immigrant communities. Adults and children have the right to have health care coverage, regardless of our immigration status.

Thanks for your time,
Bercela Mazariegos